THE FUNDAMENTALS OF LinkedIn®

Social Prospecting™ for Inside Sales Reps

UP YOUR TELESALES

The Bridge Group, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

There is ***a ton*** of information out there on how Sales Reps can and should be using LinkedIn.

It seems that everywhere you look there is another video or article offering tips & tricks. Many of the resources we have come across make the whole idea of **Social Prospecting™** feel overwhelming.

The good news is that Social Prospecting™ can be fairly simple if broken down into easy-to-master stages.

This ebook addresses Stage 1: **The fundamentals of LinkedIn**.

INTRODUCTION

We are often asked, **"What separates the most effective Sales Reps on LinkedIn from the rest?"** It really comes down to four things.

The best social prospectors:

1. **Gear their profiles towards their buyers, their market & the value they bring**
2. **Make growing their LinkedIn network a priority**
3. **Are plugged into the LinkedIn Groups where their prospects participate**
4. **Are just plain better at searching LinkedIn**

INTRODUCTION

Not coincidentally, we've broken down this ebook into:

1. **Profile**
2. **Connections**
3. **Groups**
4. **Search**

Knowing how to best leverage each of these areas will help you become an expert at Social Prospecting™ via LinkedIn.

Lynn Hidy
Founder
UpYourTeleSales.com

Janet Stucchi
Inside Sales Consultant
The Bridge Group, Inc.

1. YOUR PROFILE

PROFILE

Your profile is a summary of your professional background and qualifications. When creating your profile for Social Prospecting™, think about it from the perspective of your prospects.

It should not scream, **"SALESPERSON HERE – COMING TO SELL YOU SOMETHING!"** The fact that you're in Sales is already clear enough.

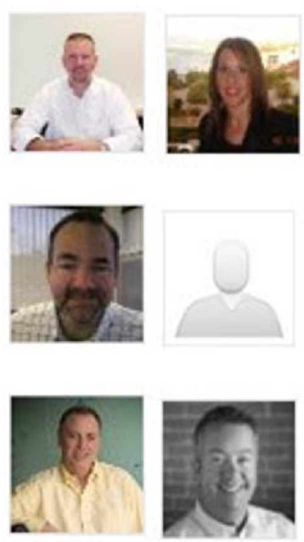
Make sure your profile supports your assertion that you ***add*** significant value in your specific area of expertise.

KEY POINT:	If you were in a prospect's shoes, looking at your profile - would you be willing to schedule a call?

USE AN ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPH

Use a headshot that looks fairly professional *(no tailgating or beach shots)*. We' not saying you need to spend money on a photo shoot, but your photo should not look like it was taken in a bathroom mirror or by a fraternity brother.

Also, unless you run a family business, the photo should be of you and you alone…no spouses, pets or children.

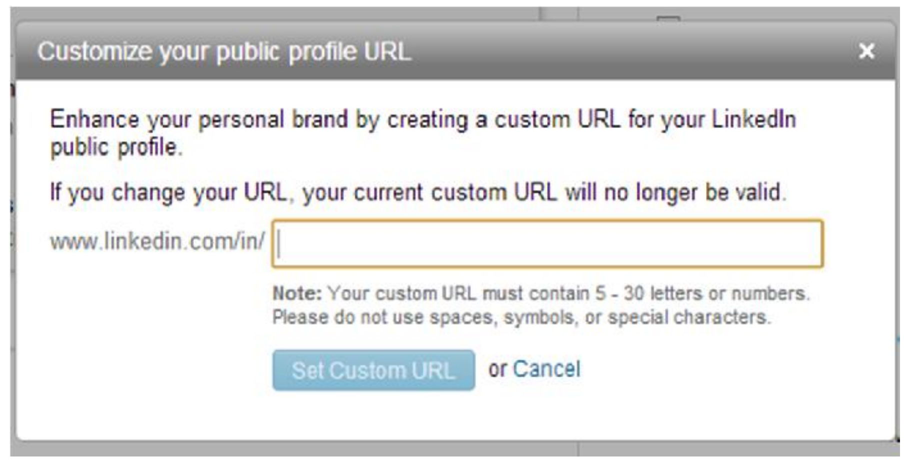


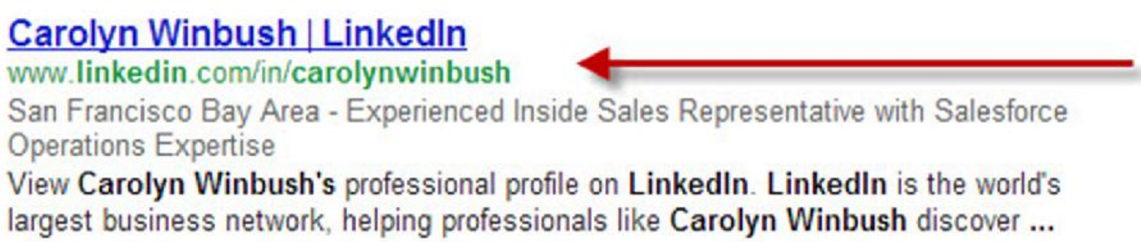
Don't let this be you.

MAKE YOURSELF FIND-ABLE

Edit your public profile URL to include your name. Go to **Edit your public profile** > **Your public profile URL** *(on the right)* > **Customize your public profile URL**.

Type the last part of your new custom URL in the text box. Keep in mind that custom public profile URLs are available on a first-come, first-served basis.



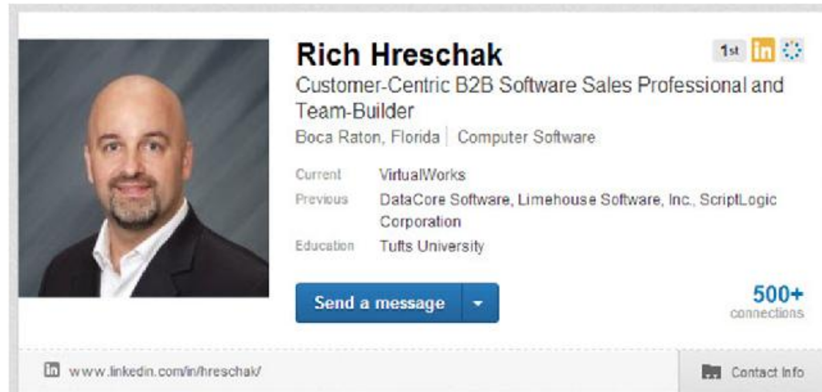


Be find-able.

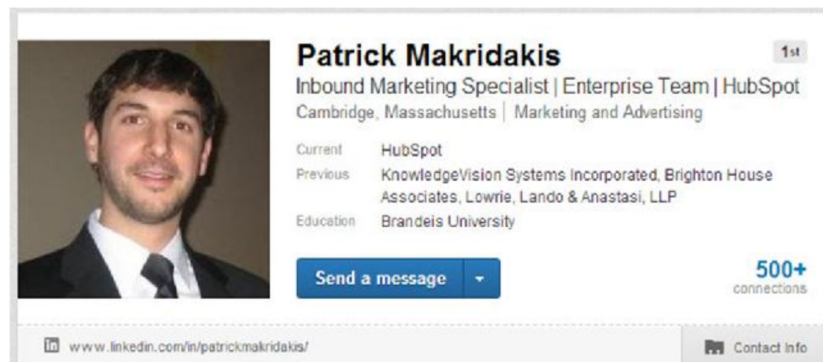
DON'T USE YOUR JOB TITLE AS YOUR HEADLINE

You are so much more than your title! Your headline should convey the value you bring to your prospects and customers.

For example, doesn't **Customer-Centric B2B Software Sales Professional** convey more value than "Sales Executive"?



How about **Inbound Marketing Specialist** versus "Inside Sales Rep"?

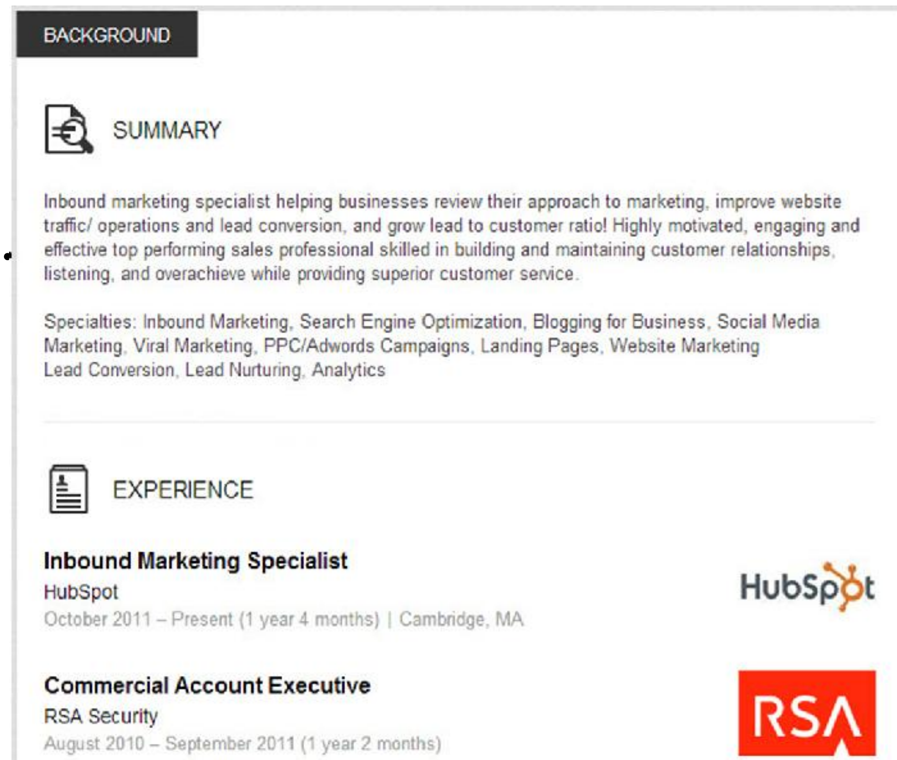


LEVERAGE YOUR *SUMMARY*

Give your prospects an understanding of what you can do ***for them***. Your summary is your personal elevator pitch.

Use it to articulate the value you bring to your customers. Make it personal & compelling.

Tip: If you have a name that's often misspelled, make it easy for prospects to find you by including those misspellings in your summary.



EG: (sometimes people think my name is spelled: Lynn Heidi or even Lynn Heidy I don't mind as long as they call me!)

DON'T TREAT *EXPERIENCE* LIKE YOUR RESUME

Your experience should demonstrate how you add value to your clients. *What experience did you accrue in each position that helped grow you as a potential trusted advisor?*

Tell your story; not the story of the company you work(ed) for. If prospects want to learn more about the company; they have plenty of other options.

Remember, **your profile is about you & the value you bring to your clients** – *period*.

One the next page, we'll share a few examples of what we mean.

Executive Sales Leader

Merkle

Merkle is a customer relationship marketing (CRM) agency, partnering with CMOs and leaders of large organizations to create outcomes that increase their media effectiveness, return on marketing investment and, ultimately, the value of their customers. We integrate our core competencies –CRM strategy, information, analytics, technology, creative and media—to drive effective communications with a brand's customers through multiple touchpoints. These can be sales channels such as a website, a retail location, a call center, or a mobile device; or they can be consumer-facing media, such as television, radio, display, print, social, direct mail, email and search. Through those, we create micro-targeting and personalization that drive marketing outcomes and performance.

About the Company

Inbound Marketing Specialist

HubSpot

I help mostly software and technology companies with an employee size of usually between 10-200 people understand how to better leverage their marketing for lead generation. I also work with a lot of VC backed companies that are leading into growth mode. I am on a team of 3 people with myself and 2 junior sales reps who identify good company profile fits for inbound marketing practices. From there I would learn about the company business model, the current marketing practices and how lead generation works to guide the company in how inbound marketing might align with the goals.

About You

WebSphere SMB Executive for Americas

IBM

My overriding goal is to make IBM the undisputed leader of the On Demand era and a company that people will want to partner with, work for and invest in.

Specifically, I am responsible for over achieving revenue goals, forecasting, coaching sales people, customer engagement, interviewing, hiring and firing, creating driving customer programs, leading key sales opportunities, and internal efforts necessary for WebSphere to succeed in the Americas.

About You

2. CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS

Connections are your 'online network.' They serve to give you credibility & reach.

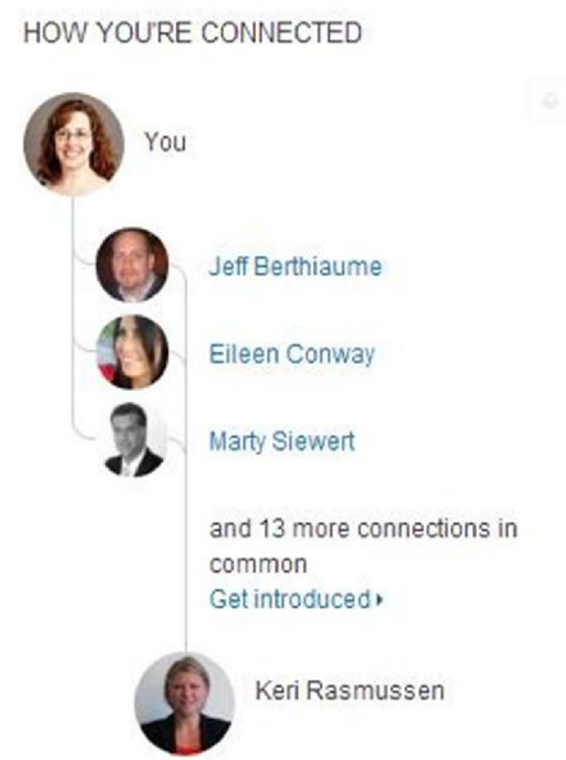
The right connections will gain you access to prospects that may otherwise ignore you; but the wrong connections could keep you on the outside looking in.

KEY POINT:	Connect with your offline network. That includes coworkers, alumni, vendors you've worked with and those you've met at conferences or events.

CONNECT WITH CUSTOMERS

They are your most important resource for gaining access to their peers. If *Prospect A* sees that you are connected to *Customer B* – with whom they've worked in the past – they are more likely to speak with you.

Think about it – if you had a recruiter calling you and saw that a former coworker has a relationship with them, wouldn't *you* be more likely to return their call?

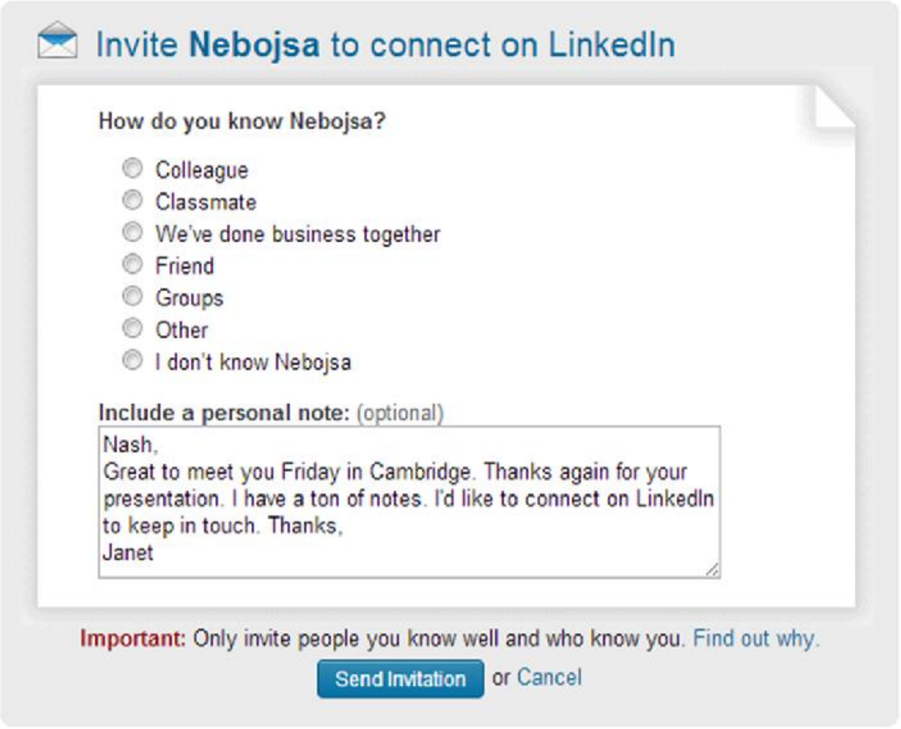


NEVER USE THE DEFAULT MESSAGE

Really, **NOT EVER**!

Instead, click 'Add a personal message' and tell them how you know them.

Whether you worked together in the past, met at a conference or are members of the same bowling league, it is important to include a personal message to refresh their memory.



DON'T BUILD *'BAD CONNECTIONS'*

Think of when you go to a party and you see the guy/girl who is a complete know-it-all, but truly brings nothing of value. You try desperately to avoid that person, right?

If you are connected to someone, and your prospects know they are a blow-hard; they may think you are one too. Guilt by association is, unfortunately, a grim reality.

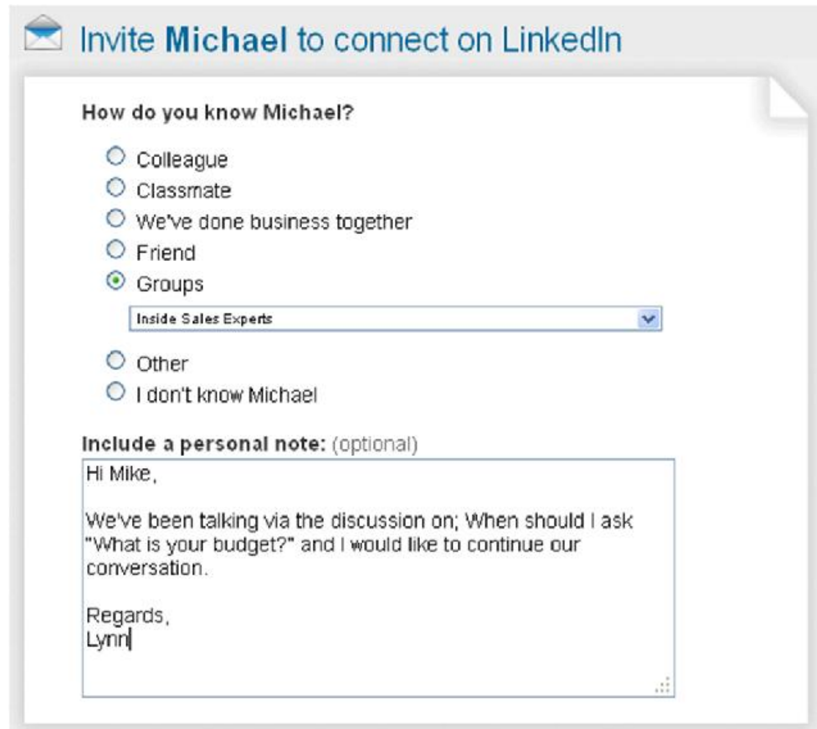
A good rule of thumb:

RESPECT *THE RULE OF THUMB*

Don't request to connect unless you actually know the person, have spoken with them, or have some kind of relationship.

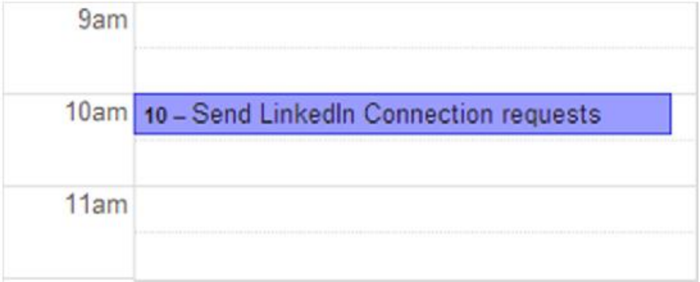
With one exception: if you've interacted via a group discussion, it is okay to send a Connection request.

Be sure to mention both your participation in the shared group and why connecting is good for them.



SCHEDULE TIME TO GROW YOUR CONNECTIONS

Take 30 minutes each week to identify conversations you have had with both customers and prospects and send each a customized connection request.



First, do the hard work of building your network; then leverage those connections to gain access to your ideal prospects.

3. GROUPS

GROUPS

Group discussions are a great way to understand the key challenges/questions/issues your prospects face and potentially identify trigger events for new opportunities.

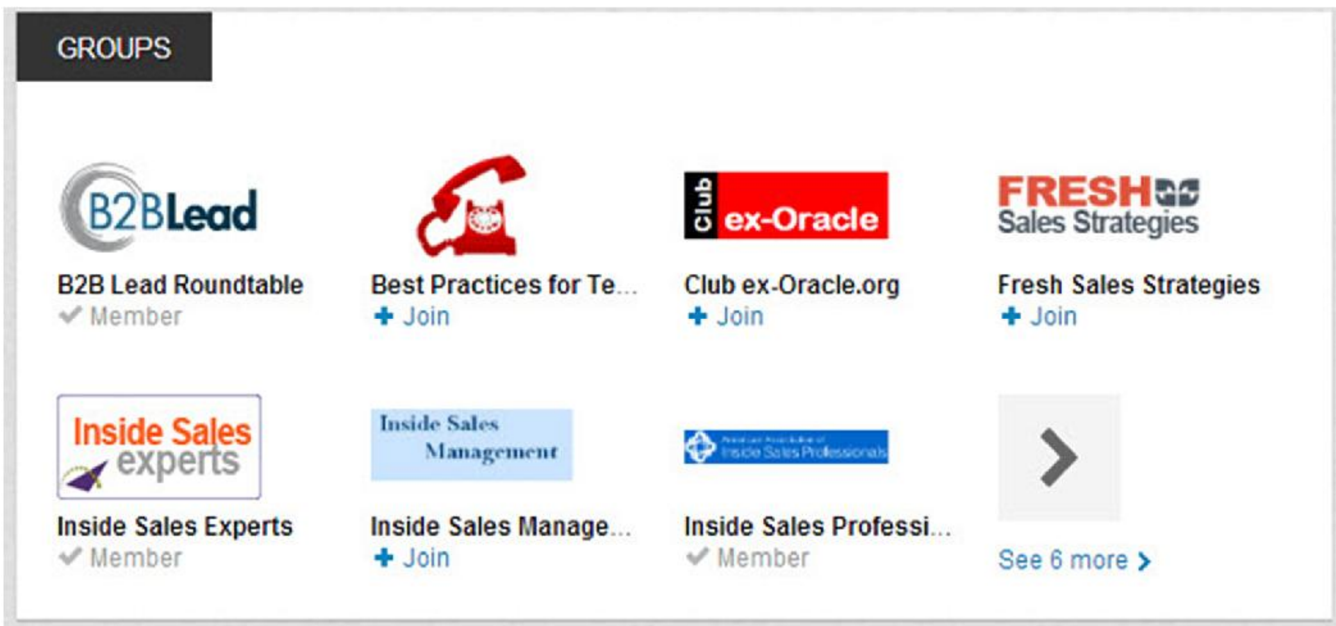
There are thousands of LinkedIn Groups – *so how do you know which ones to join?* We suggest you note the groups that your customers and prospects belong to and join those.

Also, look for industry-specific, role-specific and geo-specific groups that may help you expand your reach.

DISPLAY THE LOGOS OF *KEY GROUPS*

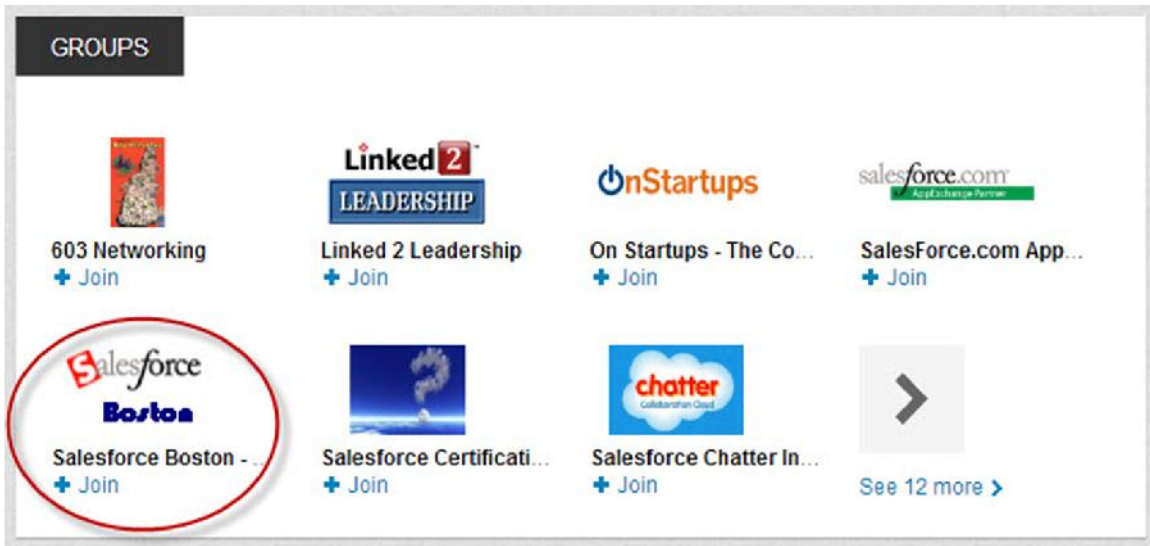
Make sure you don't list every group you belong to on your profile. You can belong to 50, but LinkedIn will display ***the first seven*** in alphabetical order.

Showcase only those that confirm your expertise and hide the remainder.



DISPLAY THE LOGOS OF *KEY GROUPS*

Consider your territory when publishing group logos on your profile. It is great to show membership in a well-known local organization.



You might also add your alumni logo to your profile. Nothing connects people faster than their alma mater.

CHOOSE 1-2 GROUPS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN

Select groups where your expertise and experience will be valued AND your prospects are likely to be members.

Always remember the following *rules of engagement* for the groups you will participate in.

Participate ONLY if you have value to add

If you work for a SaaS e-commerce company and want to participate in a discussion regarding the benefits of SaaS for ecom – go for it! The key is to provide insightful comments that enhance the knowledge of the group as a whole. It is acceptable to post links to your company's content –whitepapers, analyst comments, etc. – as long as you are posting educational content specific to a discussion.

Respect other’s opinions

Nothing will shoot you in the foot faster than getting into a verbal battle in a LinkedIn Group. This includes making disparaging competitive comments. If you are challenged, respond professionally and offer to take the discussion to email/phone. No public street fights and no mudslinging!

Don't link spam

Excessive links to product briefs, white papers, your online demo, etc. isn’t being helpful. It’s spamming. Each group has its own rules/culture for self promotion. A good rule of thumb is that if you notice a ton of other vendors spamming a given group, it probably isn’t the best place to engage with prospects. *(See next page)*

No Engagement:
Spend *less* time here

All Discussions

Connie Knowles
Want to learn how to get an offer in an interview? www2.onlinemeetingnow.com
Register today and receive and the 20 page Job Interview Prep Kit just for doing so. If you actually attend the webinar, we'll give you a 1 hour training video that teaches you exactly how to use the Prep Kit to prepare for...
23 minutes ago · Like · Comment · Share Link · Flag

John Hyman Is Inbound Marketing The 2013 Cure for Business Anxiety?
Inbound Marketing – The 2013 Cure for Business Anxiety? zenmarketinginc.com
New Year, More Anxiety for Local Business Owners - Is Inbound Marketing the 2013 Cure for Business Anxiety?
27 minutes ago · Like · Comment · Share Link · Flag

Gregory Semexant The DO's and DON'ts for Newbie Marketers........http://ow.ly/gved3
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Tom Griffin tom.griffin@fanfaresocialmedia.com Ever seen a FANfare automated social campaign? Take our Webinar to find out
Calling all web site developers, SEO, and marketing services or social media consultants! Do you need a new revenue stream from your clients and prospects? FANfare is a unique software tool that will create and deliver...
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Braden Kelley
Top 40 Innovation Bloggers of 2012 innovationexcellence.com
After two weeks of torrid voting by some of the authors' passionate supporters, and after a lot of gut-wrenching consideration and jostling during the judging round based heavily on the quality and quantity of contributions...
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Solid Engagement:
Spend ***more*** time here

Richard Rosen Question on scheduled appointments / ca out, next week etc, but not confirmed after 1 or 2...
Any suggestions on best practices?
15 days ago · Like · Comments (9) · Delete · Flag

Hillary Hepburn Looking for the best national industry ass rep. Can the group help with recommendations?
16 days ago · Like · Comments (10) · Delete · Flag

Tim Corken Social Selling: Are your teams utilizing social media tools to uncover and drive sales opportunities?
16 days ago · Likes (6) · Comments (9) · Delete · Flag

Michael Harris Do low answer rates make shot gun calls a thing of the past?
I'm not in inside sales, so I would appreciate your expert views. How many dials do you need to make today to get someone on the phone? How many 5-years ago, how many 10-years ago? I heard from http://connectandsell.com that...
20 days ago · Likes (2) · Comments (27) · Delete · Flag

Tom Scontras Looking for ideas on a BDR comp plan for appointment setting. Is there anything creative besides, pay per qualified demo? Thoughts?...
20 days ago · Like · Comments (5) · Delete · Flag

Ivan Gomez Is B2B Social Media something Inside Sales will take part in 2013 or will be it delegated to Marketing only?
21 days ago · Likes (2) · Comments (10) · Delete · Flag

4. SEARCH

SEARCH

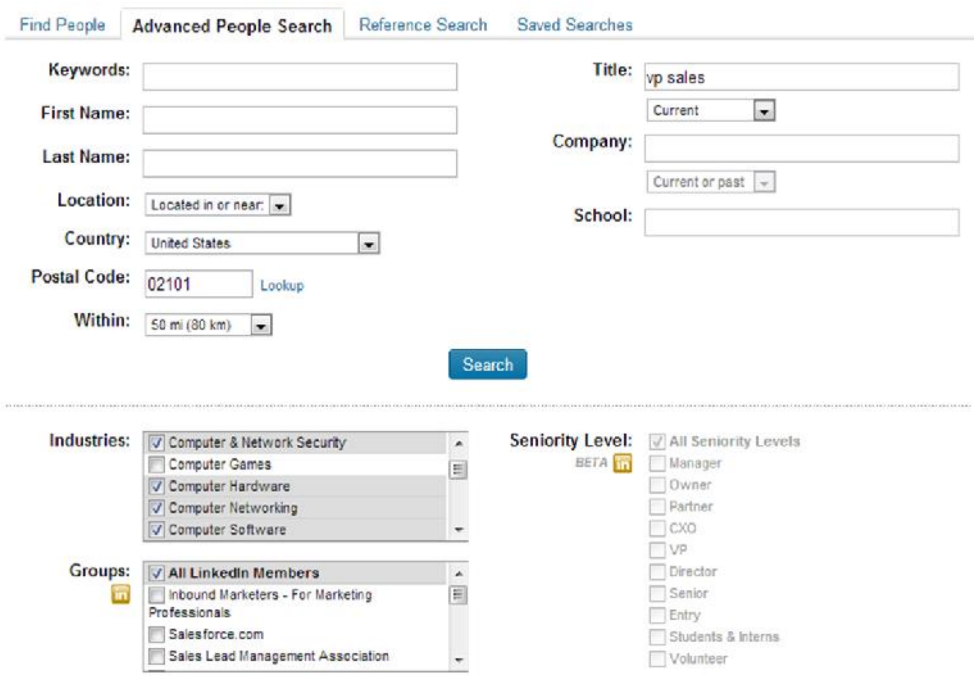
LinkedIn was born as great way to find your next job. It has evolved into one of the best Social Prospecting™ tools for finding your next customer.

The key lies in most effectively using LinkedIn to map your target accounts and identify ideal prospects.

Over the next few pages we'll share examples around the following scenario: *suppose we are targeting VPs of Sales at technology companies located in Massachusetts*.

SEARCH LIKE A PRO

Turning towards our example *(Sales VPs at tech companies in MA)*, our search criteria would be are fairly specific. We would use ***Advanced Search*** to narrow search results by geography, industry, title, etc.

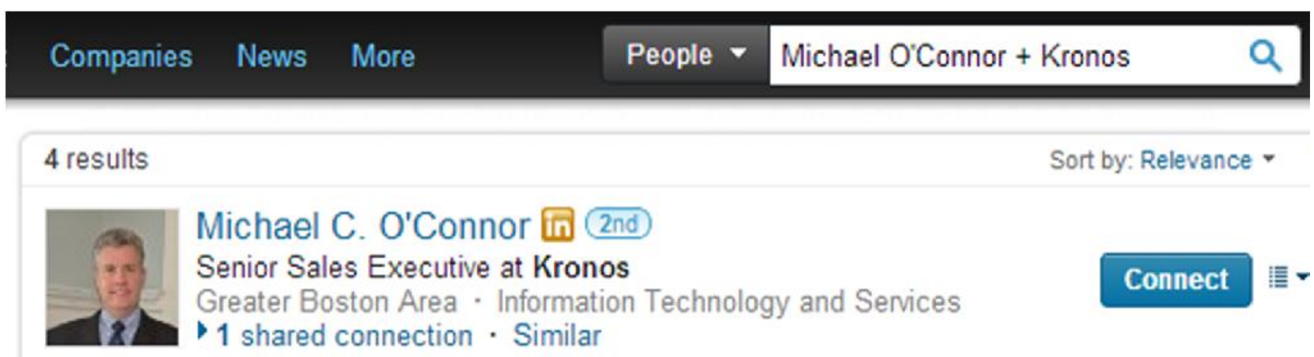


Tip: narrow search results by filtering for 'current' Job Title or Company. This enables you to locate ONLY the people who currently hold that job title or are currently employed by that company.

SAVE WASTED CLICKS

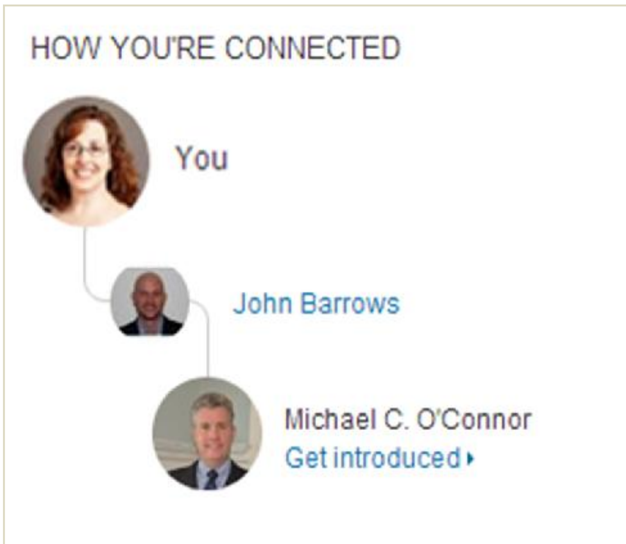
If you know precisely whom you are looking for *(name, company name)*, you can save time by including all that information in the search box.

For example, if we're looking for the profile of Michael O'Connor, searching on just his name will yield over 2K results. However, if we search **Michael O'Connor + Kronos**, we'd find exactly whom we're looking for.

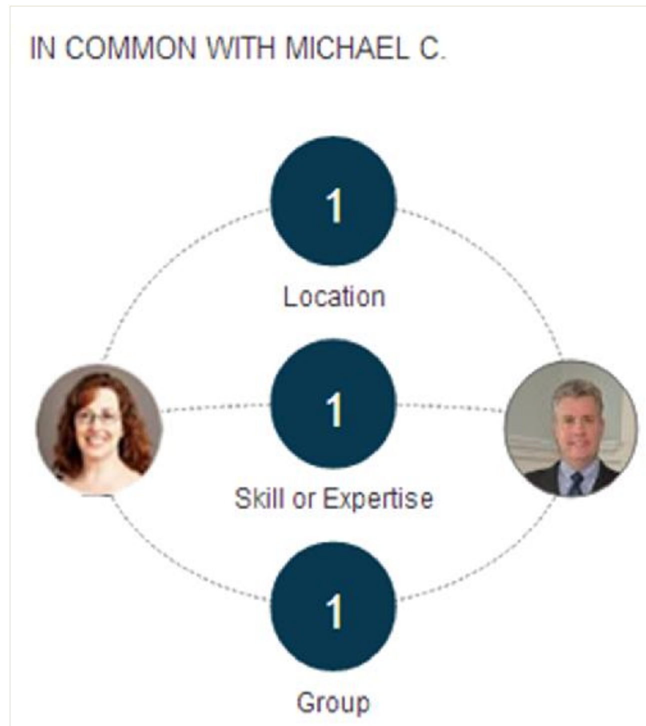


SPEAK FLUENT *DEGREES*

Once you locate the individual you are looking for, you want to see how you're connected in order to determine who or what to leverage for an introduction.



2nd *Degree* **Connection**



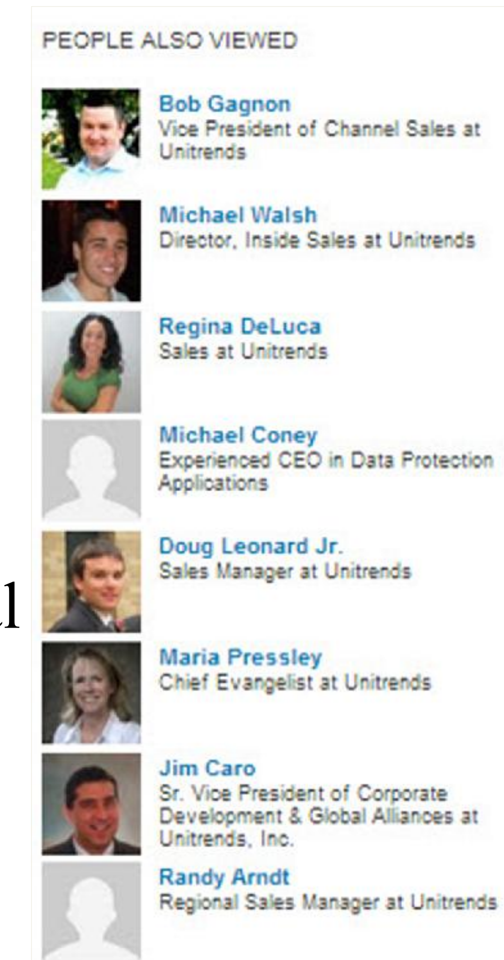
In Common **Connections**

KNOW *PEOPLE ALSO VIEWED*

While you're looking at a prospect's profile, you should pay attention to "**People also Viewed**."

Think of it as having your own *Amazon Recommendations* for ideal prospects. Save time by leveraging the results of other users' searches to **a)** find more prospects and/or **b)** map your buyer's organization.

For example: if you're looking at a VP of Sales' profile, chances are you'll see additional VPs that you can also prospect or additional contacts within that account.

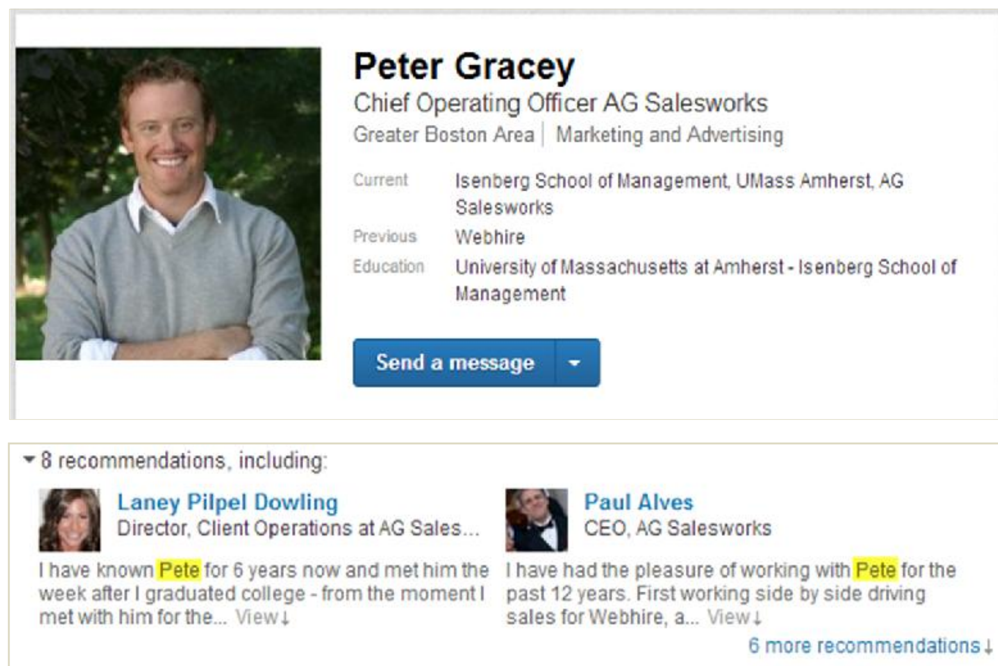


DON'T RAISE RED FLAGS

Pay attention to nicknames. Does your prospect go by "Michael" or "Mike"?

One way to figure this out is to read their **Recommendations**.

If people who know and recommend your prospect call him **Pete**; your leaving a voicemail referring to him as "Peter" will alert him to the fact that he doesn't know you.



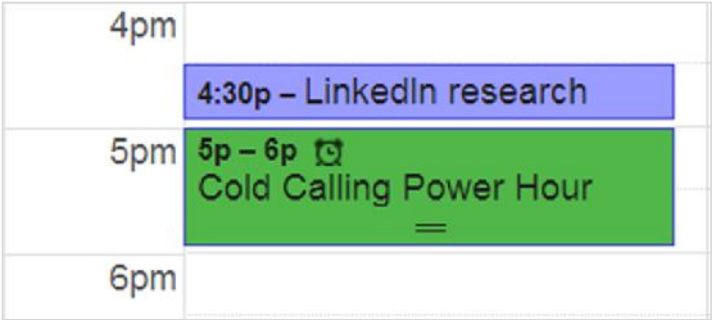
Bonus: *Look at the sample invitation on page 16. Notice anything?*

DON'T OVERDO IT

Limit the amount of time you spend looking for target contacts.

Allocating calendar time to this activity will help keep you in check and prevent you from spending prime selling times performing searches.

A good rule of thumb is 30 minutes on LinkedIn building a list should translate into at least 60 minutes of prospecting activity.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Hopefully, we've convinced you that LinkedIn is an amazing tool for Inside Sales.

If you already have a LinkedIn presence *(and most likely you do)*, take another look at your profile and use these suggestions to enhance it. Build out your connections, leverage groups and search like a pro to maximize your Social Prospecting™ efforts.

Use the checklist on the next page to ensure you have addressed the fundamentals and stay tuned for our next ebook.

Lynn Hidy
Founder
UpYourTeleSales.com

Janet Stucchi
Inside Sales Consultant
The Bridge Group, Inc.

YOUR LINKEDIN FUNDAMENTALS *CHECKLIST*

PROFILE

- [ ] **Photo**– represents who I am professionally
- [ ] **Headline**– conveys my value
- [ ] **Summary**– shows what it is like to work together
- [ ] **Experience**– shows how my accomplishments have prepared me to be a potential trusted advisor

CONNECTIONS

- [ ] **Invites**– Sent invites to my offline network
- [ ] **Calendar**– Created recurring appointment to send connection requests
- [ ] **10-** current & former customers I will connect with:

__________ __________

__________ __________

__________ __________

__________ __________

__________ __________

GROUPS

- [ ] **Customer**– Top 6 groups for my customers:

__________ __________

__________ __________

__________ __________

- [ ] **Active-** 3-4 groups I will actively follow & participate in:

__________ __________

__________ __________